Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces, 1997

May 1998

Center for Health Statistics
Division of Health
Department of Health and Family Services

Introduction

This report presents key information about marriages and divorces that *occurred* in Wisconsin in 1997. It also contains information from selected previous years, as well as information on the number and rate of marriages and divorces, both in Wisconsin and nationally. The source of these data is marriage and divorce certificates on file with the Center for Health Statistics.

The collection of marriage and divorce data is mandated by Chapter 69 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Chapter 69 authorizes the Department of Health and Family Services to supervise and direct the collection of these data. This statute also stipulates how local registrars are to collect and file certificates of marriage. Samples of the marriage and divorce/annulment certificates are included in the Technical Notes.

The Center for Health Statistics would like to recognize and thank the local Register of Deeds offices for their accurate recording of all marriage records. The Department of Health and Family Services produced this publication. Staff of the Vital Records and Statistics Unit, Center for Health Statistics, collected and compiled the marriage and divorce records. Joyce Knapton drafted the brief summaries in this report and produced the computer programs to generate the tables. Karen Gedko provided word processing and Jane Kraus supervised data collection activities.

Comment, suggestions, and requests for additional marriage or divorce data may be addressed to:

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Key Findings

- A total of 35,546 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 1997, representing a slight decrease from the 36,186 marriages that occurred in 1996.
- Wisconsin's marriage rate in 1997 was 6.8 per 1,000 total population, continuing a gradual decline in this rate since the high of 8.7 marriages per 1,000 population in 1980.
- The marriage rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 75 years.
- From 1960 to 1997, the average age of brides and grooms marrying for the first time has gradually increased. In 1960, the average age was 20.4 for brides and 22.9 for grooms, while in 1997 it was 24.6 and 26.3, respectively.
- Since 1960, the average bride in a first marriage has been approximately two years younger than the groom.
- ✓ In 1997, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September.

 August was the most popular month to marry.
- Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 1997 (5,717), followed by Dane County (2,674), Waukesha County (2,338), and Brown County (1,633). These counties were the four most populous counties in the state.
- A total of 17,289 divorces and annulments occurred in Wisconsin in 1997, for a divorce rate of 3.3 per 1,000 total population. This is identical to the 1996 rate, which was the lowest statewide rate since 1975.
- The divorce and annulment rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 75 years.
- ✓ In 1997, the total number of Wisconsin divorces was 49 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages. This is up one percent from 1996.
- The highest number of divorces and annulments occurred in Milwaukee County (2,993 divorces and 14 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,316 divorces and 6 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,136 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.
- Fifty-eight percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 1997 involved families with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving families with children, an average of 1.9 children were affected by each divorce.

Overview of Tables and Figures

Data for 1997 and other relevant years are presented in two main sections: "Marriages" and "Divorces." Technical Notes are included at the end of this report to help the reader understand and use these data.

All tables and figures in this report present Wisconsin "occurrence" data (reflecting marriages and divorces that took place in Wisconsin).

Marriages. This section provides information on the number of marriages in Wisconsin, as well as the resulting marriage rates. Table 1 includes marriage rates for the nation.

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Table 1. Marriages and Marriage Rates, 1920-1997

<u>Year</u>	Number of Wisconsin Marriages	Wisconsin <u>Marriage Rate</u>	United States Marriage Rate
1920	22,293	8.4	12.0
1925	16,385	5.8	10.3
1930	15,328	5.2	9.2
1935	21,075	6.9	10.4
1940	23,379	7.5	12.1
1945	25,269	8.5	12.2
1950	29,081	8.4	11.1
1955	25,543	7.0	9.3
1960	24,573	6.2	8.5
1965	28,410	6.7	9.3
1970	34,415	7.8	10.6
1975	35,888	7.9	10.0
1980	41,113	8.7	10.6
1985	40,014	8.4	10.1
1990	38,934	8.0	9.8
1991	37,765	7.6	9.4
1992	37,069	7.4	9.2
1993	36,415	7.2	9.0
1994	36,375	7.2	9.1
1995	36,354	7.1	8.9
1996	36,186	7.0	8.9
1997	35,546	6.8	9.1

Notes: U.S. marriage rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*.

The Wisconsin numbers and rates reflect marriages that occurred in Wisconsin.

Rates shown are marriages per 1,000 total population.

The United States marriage rate for 1997 covers only January through August of that year.

A total of 35,546 marriages occurred in Wisconsin in 1997, representing a slight decrease from the 36,186 marriages that occurred in 1996.

Wisconsin's marriage rate in 1997 was 6.8 per 1,000 total population, continuing the gradual decline in this rate since the high of 8.7 marriages per 1,000 population in 1980.

The marriage rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 75 years.

Table 2. Median Age at First Marriage and Remarriage, 1960-1997

	First M	[arriages	All Rema	arriages
Year	Bride	Groom	<u>Bride</u>	Groom
1960	20.4	22.9	39.9	45.1
1965	20.6	22.5	40.4	45.2
1970	20.8	22.6	37.4	42.6
1975	20.8	22.7	32.4	37.1
1980	21.7	23.5	31.7	34.9
1985	22.9	24.7	33.7	36.9
1990	23.8	25.5	38.3	41.6
1991	23.9	25.6	38.6	41.7
1992	24.1	25.7	38.8	42.3
1993	24.2	25.8	39.0	42.0
1994	24.3	25.8	39.4	42.3
1995	24.5	26.0	39.9	42.6
1996	24.6	26.2	40.4	43.6
1997	24.6	26.3	40.7	43.4

Note: The median age is one way of expressing the average age, and represents the midpoint of all persons in the group (half are older and half are younger than the median age). For example, in 1995 the median age for brides at first marriage was 24.5, meaning that half of all brides being married for the first time in 1995 were younger, and half were older, than 24.5. The numbers in this table reflect all marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in the stated years.

- From 1960 to 1997, the average age of brides and grooms marrying for the first time has gradually increased. In 1960, the average age was 20.4 for brides and 22.9 for grooms, while in 1997 it was 24.6 and 26.3, respectively.
- Since 1960, the average bride in a first marriage has been approximately two years younger than the groom.

Figure 1. Median Age at First Marriage and Remarriage,
Wisconsin, 1960-1997

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Bride, First Marriage
—Groom, First Marriage
—Bride, Remarriage
—Bride, Remarriage
—We Bride, First Marriage
—Groom, First Marriage
—We Bride, First Marriage
—Bride, Remarriage
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—Bride, Remarriage
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Table 3. Number of This Marriage by Age of Bride and Groom, 1997

]	BRIDE				(GROOM		
Age in	Total				Fourth	Total				Fourth
Years	Marriages	<u>First</u>	Second	Third	or More	<u>Marriages</u>	<u>First</u>	Second	Third	or More
	35,546	24,392	8,950	1,836	368	35,546	24,907	8,680	1,666	293
16	158	158				8	8			
17	189	189				30	30			
18	663	662	1			243	243			
19	1,079	1,072	7			443	443			
20	1,374	1,362	11	1		737	735	2		
21	1,728	1,700	28			1,122	1,117	5		
22	2,176	2,140	35	1		1,588	1,567	21		
23	2,448	2,349	97	2		2,003	1,970	32	1	
24	2,450	2,296	152	2		2,108	2,050	58		
25-29	9,605	8,004	1,518	78	5	10,603	9,649	932	20	2
30-34	5,184	2,752	2,142	261	29	6,315	4,303	1,860	145	7
35-39	3,468	1,103	1,868	425	72	3,873	1,773	1,783	290	27
40-44	2,151	400	1,237	415	99	2,467	660	1,412	347	48
45-49	1,353	132	847	295	79	1,627	207	1,004	345	71
50-54	659	47	413	158	41	971	87	589	227	68
55-59	313	9	214	75	15	541	31	350	132	28
60-64	208	7	145	47	9	311	18	197	77	19
65-69	156	5	111	32	8	230	8	180	33	9
70-74	98	1	61	28	8	166	7	131	20	8
75+	85	3	63	16	3	160	1	124	29	6
Unknown	1	1								

Note: Totals shown represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 1997.

Women appear to remarry more often than men.

[✓] In 1997, first-time grooms in Wisconsin outnumbered first-time brides by more than 500.

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, 1997

Table 4.	WIOIIL	111y 1V16	irrage	Totals	by Co	unty, 1	<i>))</i>						
County	Total	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	Aug	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	Nov	<u>Dec</u>
State Total	35,546	1,093	1,643	1,586	2,354	3,830	4,585	3,409	5,159	4,384	3,867	1,956	1,680
Adams	131	4	6	5	10	13	22	9	18	17	17	7	3
Ashland	162	6	9	8	8	14	21	14	28	24	18	5	7
Barron	324	7	12	15	12	43	38	41	53	45	35	11	12
Bayfield	109	1	3	5	7	12	16	18	19	10	8	6	4
Brown	1,633	52	62	74	119	183	208	128	206	240	187	92	82
Buffalo	80	4	2	5	6	3	13	9	10	11	10	3	4
Burnett	81	5	3	4	5	9	9	10	9	12	11		4
Calumet	175	2	7	6	13	15	25	20	28	30	19	5	5
Chippewa	434	14	16	12	28	50	53	39	77	60	46	26	13
Clark	210	6	9	4	19	23	31	17	27	25	29	12	8
Columbia	426	14	22	19	30	52	54	41	51	63	48	17	15
Crawford	121	7	4	4	9	14	15	11	23	15	10	6	3
Dane	2,674	87	122	126	185	282	328	264	394	312	291	138	145
Dodge	491	9	24	24	48	68	56	45	64	51	51	26	25
Door	394	7	14	9	14	40	55	48	67	53	57	19	11
Douglas	312	9	18	10	17	30	44	37	55	31	34	14	13
Dunn	248	7	9	12	14	28	33	22	40	35	22	14	12
Eau Claire	621	28	26	17	39	70	76	57	110	83	62	25	28
Florence	15	1	1			1	2	1	4	3	1	1	
Fond du Lac	700	21	29	33	48	85	88	63	98	81	87	40	27
Forest	84	2	4	1	6	6	10	10	16	16	7	4	2
Grant	303	8	8	10	19	39	42	35	40	42	36	17	7
Green	251	5	11	15	17	26	31	18	31	32	33	19	13
Green Lake	144	2	4	5	7	13	18	17	27	23	9	6	13
Iowa	175	2	7	7	11	24	21	17	21	23	26	7	9
Iron	40	4	3	3	1	3	8	8	3	2	2		3
Jackson	132	2	7	8	6	11	20	17	19	10	16	9	7
Jefferson	516	20	23	27	48	46	73	43	74	59	52	26	25
Juneau	188	4	10	9	18	22	21	16	28	22	19	9	10
Kenosha	902	29	50	55	53	87	112	81	110	113	83	66	63
Kewaunee	144	2	6	4	18	15	11	17	22	16	24	7	2
La Crosse	712	15	34	31	51	81	91	67	109	84	77	46	26
Lafayette	101		3	3	8	20	8	6	19	16	8	5	5
Langlade	160	4	9	5	8	19	20	9	27	18	19	11	11
Lincoln	244	7	13	11	15	21	32	19	35	45	22	8	16
Manitowoc	527	12	20	19	40	62	71	62	74	59	58	30	20
Marathon	859	27	39	32	63	89	112	91	130	102	83	53	38
Marinette	266	10	17	10	17	21	33	26	45	38	25	18	6
Marquette	80	3	4		1	10	13	6	7	13	11	6	6
Menominee	29			1	1	3	3	1	11	3	3		3
Milwaukee	5,717	208	336	332	367	630	670	504	787	632	614	335	302
Monroe	285	12	4	11	22	27	44	23	36	34	37	15	20

Table 4. Monthly Marriage Totals by County, 1997

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County	<u>Total</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	Nov	<u>Dec</u>
Oconto	202	6	9	6	21	13	30	17	29	27	20	14	10
Oneida	281	7	10	12	15	26	36	34	52	33	29	15	12
Outagamie	1,222	39	53	40	82	127	164	122	178	162	138	73	44
Ozaukee	521	19	17	16	33	47	72	70	81	62	59	26	19
Pepin	50		2		3	5	9	4	9	6	4	4	4
Pierce	187	6	6	6	15	24	25	16	26	29	18	6	10
Polk	278	5	14	11	17	22	40	22	51	38	32	14	12
Portage	402	6	16	15	24	42	65	38	70	41	46	19	20
Price	94	2	5	3	2	7	14	19	14	11	11	4	2
Racine	1,079	41	51	55	63	116	140	110	161	113	106	71	52
Richland	107	2	3	3	12	13	18	12	17	7	6	6	8
Rock	1,011	43	56	63	71	95	141	78	136	110	107	61	50
Rusk	125	2	7	8	9	10	16	12	23	13	14	5	6
St. Croix	403	15	27	8	31	35	63	32	62	56	32	19	22
Sauk	482	11	21	22	28	52	23	50	66	61	61	21	26
Sawyer	132	3	5	4	10	13	18	18	18	20	9	3	6
Shawano	253	5	13	12	17	26	89	26	48	28	36	11	13
Sheboygan	741	20	36	29	47	91	64	78	104	104	79	30	34
Taylor	124	3	10	4	8	17	9	14	17	19	15	5	3
Trempealeau	184	5	11	7	13	22	28	19	24	26	15	6	8
Vernon	177	7	3	8	13	14	24	18	28	24	19	12	7
Vilas	145	5	12	4	3	9	16	22	26	20	18	4	6
Walworth	712	20	19	41	45	79	89	64	94	95	76	49	41
Washburn	130	6	5	6	8	10	21	12	26	16	9	7	4
Washington	699	16	26	23	43	81	88	89	84	95	86	34	34
Waukesha	2,338	61	84	89	152	265	318	211	345	280	279	159	95
Waupaca	486	12	14	13	22	58	78	56	70	64	59	23	17
Waushara	144	3	11	5	5	16	21	17	21	21	12	8	4
Winnebago	1,053	40	57	54	67	115	134	99	151	127	108	49	52
Wood	584	14	30	28	47	70	81	43	76	73	57	34	31

Note: These numbers represent marriages that occurred in Wisconsin in 1997.

[✓] In 1997, the months with the highest number of marriages were June, August and September. August was the most popular month to marry.

Milwaukee County had the highest number of marriages in 1997 (5,717), followed by Dane County (2,674), Waukesha County (2,338), and Brown County (1,633). These counties were the four most populous counties in the state.

The lowest number of marriages occurred in the counties of Florence (15) and Menominee (29).

Table 5. Divorces/Annulments and Rates, 1920-1997

<u>Year</u>	Number in Wisconsin	Rate in Wisconsin	Rate in <u>United States</u>
1920	2,425	0.9	1.6
1925	2,467	0.9	1.5
1930	2,553	0.9	1.6
1935	3,543	1.2	1.7
1940	3,599	1.1	2.0
1945	6,393	2.2	3.5
1950	4,845	1.4	2.6
1955	4,720	1.3	2.3
1960	3,672	0.9	2.2
1965	5,232	1.2	2.5
1970	8,930	2.0	3.5
1975	13,187	2.9	4.8
1980	17,589	3.7	5.2
1985	16,596	3.5	5.0
1990	17,727	3.6	4.7
1991	18,480	3.7	4.7
1992	18,487	3.7	4.8
1993	17,527	3.5	4.6
1994	17,569	3.5	4.6
1995	17,313	3.4	4.4
1996	17,218	3.3	4.4
1997	17,289	3.3	4.3

Notes: U.S. divorce and annulment rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*.

Rates are divorces and annulments per 1,000 total population.

The Wisconsin numbers and rates represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin.

The United States divorce rate for 1997 covers only January through August.

A total of 17,289 divorces and annulments occurred in Wisconsin in 1997, for a divorce rate of 3.3 per 1,000 population. This is identical to the 1996 rate, which was the lowest statewide rate since 1975.

The divorce and annulment rate in Wisconsin has been consistently lower than the national rate for more than 75 years.

[✓] In 1997, the total number of Wisconsin divorces was 49 percent of the total number of Wisconsin marriages. This is up one percent from 1996.

Table 6. Divorces and Annulments by County, 1997

County	Divorces	Annulments	County	Divorces	Annulments
Total	17,244	45			
Adams	65	1	Marathon	388	1
Ashland	66		Marinette	165	
Barron	173		Marquette	48	
Bayfield	58		Menominee	1	
Brown	740	1	Milwaukee	2,993	14
Buffalo	37		Monroe	165	3
Burnett	46		Oconto	134	
Calumet	97	1	Oneida	155	
Chippewa	184	1	Outagamie	535	1
Clark	104	1	Ozaukee	240	
Columbia	133		Pepin	14	
Crawford	67		Pierce	89	
Dane	1,316	6	Polk	147	
Dodge	294		Portage	194	
Door	73		Price	48	
Douglas	144		Racine	486	2
Dunn	122		Richland	60	1
Eau Claire	291	1	Rock	621	1
Florence	18		Rusk	48	
Fond du Lac	315		St. Croix	180	
Forest	33		Sauk	228	
Grant	129		Sawyer	67	
Green	137		Shawano	142	
Green Lake	53	2	Sheboygan	366	
Iowa	62		Taylor	64	
Iron	35		Trempealeau	69	
Jackson	55		Vernon	87	
Jefferson	251	1	Vilas	76	
Juneau	76		Walworth	287	
Kenosha	461		Washburn	49	
Kewaunee	58		Washington	342	1
La Crosse	320		Waukesha	1,136	1
Lafayette	46		Waupaca	215	
Langlade	71	1	Waushara	94	
Lincoln	135		Winnebago	514	3
Manitowoc	269	1	Wood	263	

Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 1997.

The highest total number of divorces and annulments occurred in Milwaukee County (2,993 divorces and 14 annulments), followed by Dane County (1,316 divorces and 6 annulments) and Waukesha County (1,136 divorces and 1 annulment), reflecting the large populations of these three counties.

The lowest total number of divorces and annulments occurred in the counties of Menominee (1 divorce), Pepin (14 divorces), and Florence (18 divorces).

Table 7. Divorces Affecting Children Under 18 Years of Age by County, 1997

State Total 17,289 10,001 18,583 Adams 66 32 52 Marathon 389 224 405 Ashland 66 45 82 Marinette 165 90 164 Barron 173 101 188 Marquette 48 27 54 Bayfield 58 33 62 Menominee 1 0 0 Brown 741 411 754 Milwaukee 3,007 1,614 3,042 Buffalo 37 23 45 Monroe 168 102 186 Burnett 46 28 48 Oconto 134 76 144 Calumet 98 62 113 Oneida 155 91 182 Chippewa 185 114 215 Outagamie 536 326 635 Clark 105 68 134 Ozaukee 240 141 270 <
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Kewaunee 58 45 92 Washington 343 219 380
La Crosse 320 191 345 Waukesha 1,137 595 1,073
Lafayette 46 31 58 Waupaca 215 146 262
Langlade 72 50 88 Waushara 94 50 90
Lincoln 135 91 186 Winnebago 517 289 535
Manitowoc 270 164 316 Wood 263 163 324

Note: These numbers represent divorces and annulments that occurred in Wisconsin in 1997.

Fifty-eight percent of all Wisconsin divorces in 1997 involved families with children under 18 years of age. Among divorces involving families with children, an average of 1.9 children were affected by each divorce.

Marriage Reporting Requirements:

As specified in Wisconsin State Statute 69, the following is a brief outline of the sequence of events which take place when a marriage occurs in Wisconsin:

The filing party (officiant) must register the certificate of marriage with the local Register of Deeds within 3 days after the event.

The local Register of Deeds must transmit the marriage certificate to the State Registrar within 10 working days after its receipt.

Marriage Certificate:

A sample marriage certificate form can be found on page 16.

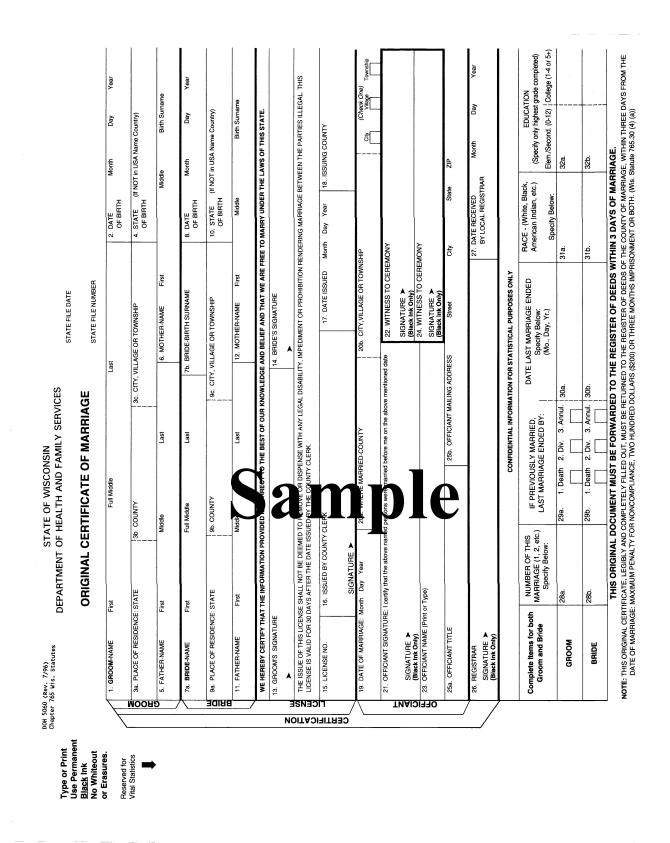
Divorce Reporting Requirements:

As specified in Wisconsin State Statute 69, the following is a brief outline of the sequence of events which take place when a divorce occurs in Wisconsin:

At the end of every biweekly period the filing party (clerk of any court) must send to the State Registrar a report of every divorce or annulment of marriage granted during that period. (This is the only legal document pertaining to vital records that is not filed by the local Register of Deeds.)

Divorce Certificate:

A sample divorce certificate form can be found on page 17.



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